

Applying Adaptive Politics: Family, Freedom and Into The Future

by Talaine Mare

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Author Identity Clarification

Some of the material in this book has previously been published in other books under the pen name 'TaraElla'. To clarify, TaraElla is the popular culture pen-name of the author of this book.

Related titles written under the name 'TaraElla' that you may want to check out include:

The Millennials' Quarter Life Crisis: A Generation at a Revolutionary Crossroads

Ideas for the World's Future: A Collection of Cultural, Social and Politically Themed Articles

Prologue: The Adaptive Politics Manifesto

This book is an extension of *The Adaptive Politics Manifesto*. It contains articles written by the author in the same perspective as in the previous book. Therefore, it is useful to revisit the Adaptive Politics Manifesto, the unifying perspective of all the material in these two books.

If you have read the manifesto in *The Adaptive Politics Manifesto* before, then feel free to skip this section.

The Adaptive Politics Manifesto

Having seen the world develop in various parts of history and the way society responded to new challenges, I have come to the conclusion that adaptation to new realities is one of the most important tasks of any political ideal. If a political ideal or program is implemented maladaptively, it may end up harming its own aims. Consequently, ensuring adaptiveness in this aspect, and ensuring that there are no unjust outcomes during periods of adaptations, becomes very important.

The rest of this manifesto will address just how we can achieve these objectives.

1. Continued adaptation in policies and politics will always be necessary.

The world is always changing, and further change is inevitable. The world now is different from the world in the 1910s, which was different from the 1810s and the 1710s. There's no reason to suggest that things will look any less different in the 2110s. Technology certainly has a central role in this change, and it is only accelerating.

We also discover new things about the world every now and then. For example, just 50 years ago most people thought that being gay was a lifestyle choice, and that interracial marriage was bad for families. In light of new facts, it would be unjust not to change some pre-existing arrangements. The best example of this is the recent marriage equality movement. Whilst we may think we are civilised now, there may still be many things we don't know yet. People in the 1600s considered themselves very civilised too.

In light of the above factors, society will need to continue to adapt to new environments and newly emerged facts of life for the foreseeable future. There is no use running away from this fact. Therefore, a framework for adaptive politics, i.e. how society should best adapt to changes, is needed.

2. Adaptation must be principled, else it will become maladaptive.

When we respond to things, we must do so in a principled manner, with those principles informed by our values. Using 'maintenance of the status quo' as the ideal (a common theme of conservative politics) is therefore counterproductive. Maintaining the status quo in light of new developments may mean the introduction of blatant injustice into our culture. By conserving the literal status quo no matter the price, our pre-existing social values like justice, fairness and compassion often disintegrate.

Note that this does not preclude one from responding to certain things using traditionalist or even 'reactionary' principles. But the application of the principle must be consistent, rather than shying away from the new development and pretending that it does not exist.

3. Adaptation methods can be progressive or reactionary. Both have their value, and both can be dangerous too.

Two main categories of ways to respond to new challenges, which can be equally principled (or not), are progressive ways and reactionary ways. Progressive ways aim to invent new solutions, and reactionary ways aim to bring society back to its original principles. Therefore, both can be valid. However, both can be dangerous too. Fascism came from reactionary impulses, and eugenics came from progressive impulses. Both were classic cases of each form of impulse 'overreaching'.

4. No adaptation method is perfect from the start. All adaptation attempts have to learn from plenty of previous mistakes, often horrible mistakes.

Especially in the beginning, attempts at responding to new developments often overshoot in either, or even both, of the directions described above. Therefore, they are maladaptive at least to a significant degree. Although the mistakes made are rarely as big as fascism and eugenics, they often include a huge amount of injustice, often necessitating official apologies from future administrations. Examples include forced adoptions during the post-war era, racist immigration policies in the 20th century, attempts to provide 'treatment' for gay and lesbian individuals, and segregation in the American south.

It is often only with trial and error that we gather the evidence to rule out maladaptive and unjust practices. For

example, we now know that curative therapy for gay people is ineffective and harmful, but in the past people thought they were doing these 'ill' individuals a service. We now know that forced adoptions, and the associated practice of secretive adoptions was a tragedy, but similarly in the 1950s the experts thought that was a good thing to do. Therefore, adaptation taking time to perfect is an inevitable thing.

5. Therefore, the most efficient and painless and the only just way for adaptation to happen is with maximal freedom of conscience.

In light of the above, any response (or lack of response, for example refusal to legislate for marriage equality) society has collectively made in response to new developments may be severely unjust and harmful, especially in the earlier phase of the response. Therefore, such collective decisions must not be forcibly applied to any individual, consistent with the 'do no harm' idea. The decision to be part of a response or not must be voluntary. Therefore, maximal freedom of conscience must be granted to every adult citizen in a society.

A model of 'free market of ideas' also allows ideas to be experimented on in parallel and selected through competition, thus increasing the speed in which a response becomes adaptive, and hastening the awareness and removal of any unjust aspects. Of course, such a market also

functions best when proper debate, without requirements for political correctness and with respect of all parties, can occur in society. Therefore, this should be encouraged.

6. Maximal freedom of conscience comprises of a balance of negative and positive freedoms.

The provision of this maximal freedom of conscience must include a balance of negative and positive freedoms.

Negative freedoms are freedoms that occur when the government does not interfere against them, and positive freedoms are freedoms that can only be guaranteed with suitable intervention, for example anti-discrimination laws and economic safety nets.

The concept of 'positive freedom' is required, because otherwise we would have a tyranny of the rich and powerful. Poor individuals could essentially become slave-like in their existence and forced to conform to whatever demand from the rich just for survival. The rich and powerful will then be able to shut out the voices of the poor in any debate. However, a strong concept of 'negative freedom' is also required, as it guarantees that people will not be required to go along with a practice just because it has been collectively determined as 'good'.

This is a rough rule that can be used to assess this balance I have proposed: governments should only be able to intervene and thus take away some 'negative freedom' when it will result in the net gain of 'positive freedom' or at least no net loss of freedom overall in society, and the redistribution is just, i.e. from a party having more freedom to a party having less freedom, with the result of the distribution not reversing this relationship. This rule can be used to justify welfare programs and anti-discrimination laws, whilst limiting the ability of the government to tax excessively or run forced adoption programs again.

Note

This book is divided into two volumes because it was originally published as two books.

Volume One

Chapter 1. A Traditionalist’s Basis for Supporting a Freedom- based Platform

I may not agree with your lifestyle, but I will fight for your right to Live It

I may not agree with your lifestyle, but I will fight for your right to live it. That is because I am a proponent of freedom. It is a natural, modern day extension of the idea that 'I may not agree with what you say, but I will fight for your right to say it'.

I am a proponent of freedom because I believe that none of us mere human beings can know the whole truth of the world. We are bound to make mistakes one way or another, serious mistakes, if we force our beliefs onto others in any way. It is time we move past doing that, and we must do that consistently.

Therefore, we must make as little interference into others' personal lives as possible as a society. But not just that. We must have an economic safety net for people to live a reasonably decent life with reasonable amount of choices they can make (some may not recognise it, but freedom and socialism do go hand and hand to some extent). We must have a set of antidiscrimination laws for people to take off the pressure of non-conformity.

We all know that the limits of freedom lie in that crimes that victimise others should not be allowed, and your freedom is no excuse to intrude into others' freedom.

But how about more controversial things - like do people have a right to choose to get drunk and consume mind-altering drugs? Their right to do so must be balanced by others' right not to be victimised by those not in control of their actions.

Liberation 2.0 Now!

Once upon a time, people longed for liberation, after a long period of oppressive, conservative rule. Some of them believed that to achieve liberation, we must be free of the constraints of the family, of religion, and participation in politics, or even to take mind-altering drugs to disconnect from this world altogether.

Luckily (at least I believe so, you are entitled to hold your opinion on this and I will respect your opinion regardless), many of us were never involved in this, and this idea of 'liberation' never went mainstream. The reason, I think, is clear. Most people love their family and are closely connected to their religion, and wouldn't welcome the intrusion of their lives by mind-altering drugs. However, the very idea of liberation still has its value, even if it doesn't mean leaving your family and your religion behind and getting into drugs.

The very idea of liberation is that we should be able to control our own fate, without interference from government or established religious authorities, as long as we are not hurting anybody else. Therefore, I suggest a new version of liberation - where you can keep your family, religion and clean living lifestyle, but just to make it a little less susceptible to the often unfair and sometimes immoral inference from established political,

religious or populist authorities, we are going to have to change the institutions of society around a bit, so as to put individuals back in control of their own destiny again. I call this project Society 2.0 and it encompasses projects like Marriage 2.0. Welcome to Liberation 2.0!

The Manifesto of the New Multiculturalism

I am a total supporter of multiculturalism. And by that, I mean not just support for high levels of migration and the co-existence of different ethnic cultures.

Multiculturalism by definition has to include that, but 50 years after the idea's conception, it is now time to add more to it. Besides acknowledging the right of the main ethnicity and religion based cultures to exist and to function in our society (as long as they don't harm individual liberty), may I say that all the other 'cultures' in society that are not based on historical ethnic divides but rather on the attitudes we have and the lifestyle choices we make in the modern world, should be accorded the same recognition and space to function too. This idea will, from now on, form the very basis of my platform, and all other beliefs and causes of mine will have to factor this in too.

The biggest implication of this, I guess, is that every individual should be accorded the maximum amount of freedom available whilst they don't harm or restrict the freedom of a third party. Obviously, you still shouldn't be able to run around the streets naked because that is very offensive to many people, nor should you be able

to wander the streets drunken and posing a danger to the people around you, because that is taking the right of people to use the streets without fear. However, we should never persecute individuals for doing what they do privately, no matter what our own personal moral values are.

Multiculturalism demands that every cultural group be bestowed the same recognition, dignity and opportunities, both in law and in the society. Therefore, in this new version of multiculturalism, policies like legalising same-sex marriages become a necessity (if we view the queer community as a distinct cultural group).

On My Economic Position

I support the welfare state. I heartily support universal health care, and hope that the US will get it ASAP. For these positions I have been called a socialist. The more accurate term for my economic position is social democrat rather than socialist, really, and I am proud of it.

Pure capitalism has illiberal consequences, you see. In pure capitalism, people are only able to live reasonably well and have a reasonable range of lifestyle choices if they have enough money. And to have enough money, you may need to work like a slave. Therefore, the less well off (the majority of society) are never truly free in a pure capitalist system. Therefore, pure capitalism is incompatible with liberty.

Pure capitalism is also incompatible with being family friendly. If our children are to grow up well, their parents need a living wage. If adult children are to take care of their elderly parents, they need to be on a living wage. Poor people in highly capitalistic societies have been known to abort fetuses because they can't afford to have another child - how sad.

Therefore, my conscience does not allow me to be a pure capitalist, nor condone any society run in that

manner. In fact, if the only choices I had were pure capitalism or pure socialism (the European kind not the communist kind), I would have to choose the latter, because of my moral convictions. But knowing that the market economy does have its positives, and my libertarian principles telling me that if we can achieve the same results with less government intervention then we should do that, I end up in a social democrat (centre-left) position.

The Morality of Taxes: A Discussion

Some libertarians believe that government taxation is anti-freedom and the equivalent of robbery. I happen to not believe in this entirely, and I have my own reasons.

In a market economy, anybody who earns a decent income is earning it from society, by rendering their services to society. If a healthy society does not exist, they will quickly lose their market. For example, in a civil war affected country most industries go out of business. In a state where the government does not invest in infrastructure, the potential for businesses to grow is limited. Therefore, requiring those who have benefited from a well run society to pay back to that society from what they have earned is just, as long as it is not at an unreasonable level (like taking 98% of your income).

To highlight the fact that taxes are a fair exchange of benefit, I would like to further advocate that the government provide an option where a citizen can opt out of taxes, but will not be able to use any government-sponsored service like most of the infrastructure that has been set up in society. I guess very few will select that option.

Now, you may argue that whilst taxation that goes to infrastructure, security and defence may be fair, taxation that goes to welfare for the poor is not. However, I should point out that giving everybody a living wage and adequate healthcare is the cornerstone of supporting a healthy society. A society that has a big underclass will soon evolve into a society with civil unrest. Likewise, a more educated and informed populace is more receptive to different personal and interpersonal needs, and will provide a good market for many types of services. You really cannot say that profit making businesses do not benefit from this work that the government is doing. This work is not socialism, it is just part of providing a good infrastructure and human capital that benefits everyone, businesses included.

I do, however, believe that some forms of taxation is not fair. The inheritance tax, for example, has no ethical basis. The wishes of the passed person to pass their wealth onto anybody else is entirely their own decision, and it is a disrespect of the dead to tax what they have left behind.

Why my Movement is Logical, and What is Missing

My movement, a combination of more 'traditional' aspects of family values, and a 'lovefest' of human rights based progressive ideals, does not seem all that logical. Definitely, it defies the traditional stereotypes of the left-right division. I have thus been described by my readers as both 'very liberal', and 'very conservative'.

However, this is just because everyone has been using the tainted lens of the contemporary cultural war in the Western world to view everything. Let me put it this way: the arguments for discrimination, racism, homophobia and sexism will end in nothing as one day soon we will move forward and embrace equality anyway. Those who support discrimination are simply on the wrong side of history. This battle for equality is just a contemporary issue. However, the argument and struggle for a society marked by stable, healthy familial structures is an ongoing project that will benefit generations to come. It is a struggle that must be contributed to in a ongoing manner, and the battle is timeless.

The two are also actually synergistic with each other - in a world of equality, families will be more able

to support their children who are 'different' - thus contributing to familial stability, for example.

Ultimately, both fights come together to better the experience of humanity, in the long run.

So if I believe the battle for equality is just contemporary, why am I jumping up and down about it and spending that much energy on it? This is because I believe that, if we delay equality by ten years, it will be ten years too late to save some people from harm - a lot of people indeed.

I believe a lot of people actually believe in the co-existence of these two ideals, but due to the media being dominated by a few, many are led to believe, from what they see in the media, that they can't coexist. That is why besides just talking about it I have put out examples / prototypes of new models of media that allow us to express this ideal, this hope. However, the work of one, otherwise very busy, person is not enough. I hope that there will be more self made stars out there who will follow this lead, and contribute to the ongoing fight that will benefit humanity.

A Liberal for Traditional Values, Please?

A common assumption is that if you are in support of traditional values you go for the conservative parties and toe their line on cultural matters. But then, I don't think that necessarily works. Consider the following reasons:

- 1) Conservative parties are there for the economic policies mainly, with the social policies little more than decorative. Their main aim is to promote unrestrained capitalism which will harm the economy in the end (as seen in 2008) and abolish all welfare so that traditional institutions like the family end up collapsing.
- 2) The 'conservative' cultural line is not what everyone believes how traditional values should be implemented in today's world. Take gay relationships as an example. Gay relationships are here to stay, even the homophobes must concede. There are two ways to deal with the increasing number of open gay relationships - either you provide for a structure to include them in the stable family model that has worked over the years, or you protect the formerly exclusively heterosexual institutions by excluding gay people, and encourage them to take on 'alternative lifestyles' as a side effect. I

happen to prefer the former, but the 'conservatives' happen to prefer the latter. This debate is mirrored in many religious institutions, with a rift opening in many churches because of the same argument. Which brings me to my third point.

3) When we can't really agree on how to get things done, even if we are onto the same general idea, we must agree to disagree, and see which way turns out to be the best. That means we must have the freedom, each of us, to decide to do the right thing. I don't believe in the freedom to do just anything, but I believe in the freedom to do what is right, and that, ironically, requires the freedom to do what some believe is wrong too (since we sometimes have to agree to disagree). The conservative approach to things is that only ONE way of implementing traditional values is allowed, meaning that all other ways would be disallowed. Have you ever thought for a while, for example, that a ban on gay marriage, as much as being religiously motivated, is actually stampeding on the freedom of religion?

Therefore, as a free thinking traditionalist, I would rather support liberal policies on most social matters, instead implementing traditional values by cultural means.

End the Modern Caste Division

Liberals of most stripes have always been against the modern caste divisions (unhealthy hierarchies everywhere in different forms). The caste system is a favourite of the conservatives, because it is the status quo, and because it favours those who have power retaining their status, both socially and economically. However, the caste system way of doing things, which may be good for classifying information, is no good if used on people, because it causes distrust, intense rivalry, and in the extreme form, bullying and inefficiency. Therefore, us liberals, who want to change things for the better whenever there is an imperative to do so, is against the caste system.

The best way to rebel against the caste system is to ignore it. Just be friendly and polite to everyone. Never, ever use any hierarchy position that you may have got to your advantage - ignoring the system is the best way to combat it. A system that does not enjoy widespread recognition will soon lose its authority, remember.

Chapter 2. Imagining the New World: There Will be a Place for Everyone

Defending My Right to Promote my own Culture

Whilst I believe that everyone should have the right to live their own lives, I do believe that everybody should have the right to promote their own culture and lifestyle choices too.

For example, I am against substance abuse myself. In my own standards, any recreational drug use should be avoided. For myself, getting drunk even once should be avoided. I am also not in favour of dressing in revealing ways, practicing serial monogamy, or having sex before you are ready to have a permanent family. Whilst I won't force these beliefs on anyone else, I do believe I have the right to promote my own standards to other people and encourage them to adopt these standards without forcing them to. Since I believe these standards are good ones to have, it is only natural that I promote them to other people, just like how some people champion the diet that got them thin or the philosophy that worked for them.

That should be simple, right?

However, I have managed to step on some toes just by advocating that. I think this is unhealthy. If we are to

have a pluralistic, tolerant society, we should be prepared to listen to all kinds of opinions and advice, including those that some of us don't like.

The Sport of Multiculturalism

In a multicultural society we prize tolerance very highly, and for obvious reasons.

But sometimes, to highlight our differences can be just as fruitful, as long as we do it in a benign way. We understand ourselves and our identity more when we highlight our differences.

For example, I understand my own beliefs more in the light of seeing others who have other beliefs and therefore lead very different lifestyles.

I wouldn't want to live that lifestyle or believe those things myself, but nonetheless it shows that we are all free to pursue our lives according to what we believe in. That is, as long as we do it in a benign way. Never should we discriminate against other people, exclude other people or put them down just because of who they are, where they come from, or what they believe in.

I suggest a New Right - the Freedom of Culture

Stemming from my support for multiculturalism, I hereby suggest a new human right - the freedom of culture.

This right is in concept similar to the freedom of religion we are familiar with, except it extends beyond nominal religious belief into lifestyle and more everyday issues.

I believe this is important for a few reasons: firstly, there can't be true multiculturalism and equality if the mainstream demands conformity of all and goes out of its way to make sure the non-conforming are disadvantaged in life. Secondly, there is no clear line where religious belief and moral values end and lifestyle choices begin, and the two are often intertwined with each other. Therefore, to fulfil freedom of religion in the broadest possible way, we need to have a right to freedom of culture too. Lastly, and most importantly, just like none of us are divine enough to force our religion on others, none of us are really good enough to force our culture on others. Having a right to freedom of culture recognises this, and recognises that we are all equal, and nobody is perfect.

Justification for the minimum of freedom

Some people just want to outlaw everything in life that they don't like. Some are more moderate, and just want to outlaw things that seem offensive to a group of people. Things from alternative cultural practices to different beliefs, however, get occasionally targeted as things to outlaw too.

Don't you wish that everything in your life would conform to your specifications? If I got my way, for example, prohibition would become the law of the land, divorce would be completely unheard of, all music videos that are sexual would be banned, and all religions that antagonise other religions would be abolished. If that was the law of the land however, I believe many of you would just have to rise up and rebel.

The truth is that, we live in a land where we must tolerate what each other does. I believe that a life without alcohol at all would be good for all, but I recognise that drinking in moderation does nobody harm indeed, and I am in no position to judge people for

doing that. What I can do is, however, to promote a no-alcohol lifestyle to more people, and let them take it up voluntarily.

I also recognise that the way we currently do the 'war on drugs' is more harmful than good (just read all the evidence out there if you don't believe me), and must be changed, in particular we should not persecute individuals for their personal drug use habits. This is regardless of my otherwise antagonistic attitude towards mind altering drugs - we just have to do the thing that provides the best outcome for everyone.

Nor are we more than mere mortals indeed. How can we know what we want for the rest of the world is always right? I have, for example, refused to support polyamorists because I don't think it is a good way to live especially around children, but I have also strongly advocated against their persecution unlike most of mainstream society. We can say we think they are in the wrong, but we cannot say that we definitely know that they are in the wrong - in what position are we to say this?

Therefore, as supported by multiple examples over controversial issues in real life, I believe that letting people have their own freedom to live as they wish without persecution (unless they are doing another person harm), even if they use that freedom to do something that we really cannot agree on, is a basic

value that we must promote and preserve.

Rules and Liberty

I recently read in a book about America that

- 1) Living in America means having quite a lot of freedoms;
- 2) Living in America means playing by the rules

I think that applies to most societies as well. Sometimes we need to play by the rules so that we have our freedom. The important thing is that those rules don't actually lead to a loss of freedom in the end. And the other important thing is that - we should not have 'unwritten rules' - I hate them outright. The key to living in a society with freedom and using freedom to foster creativity and vibrance is that, whenever there is no rule disallowing a certain behaviour, it should be allowed.

Chapter 3. An Adaptive Take on Family Values

Taking Back Family Values

We should take back the term 'family values'. Long abused by the far right, especially in the USA, 'family values' means things that work for the benefit of our families, and has nothing to do with religious fundamentalism or discrimination.

Supporting same-sex marriage is consistent with family values. It supports a same sex couple to stay together for longer, and provides a good backdrop for them to raise any children they may have between them.

Removing discrimination itself is also consistent with family values - we all have family members who are 'different' and are at risk of society's discrimination - we can only help them, and help them all, by removing all forms of discrimination.

Maintaining a living wage for everybody is also consistent with family values. People need to not have to work for 70 hours a week to provide for their family to be able to spend quality time with their family. Obviously, families function better when their financial stress is taken off them. Therefore, no matter how good the capitalist system may sound in terms of profits, I will remain a family-values bound social democrat.

Spanking your child in public is offensive

You all know that I am anti corporal punishment when it comes to children. However, I generally don't support prosecuting parents who spank their children, as this will only further harm family dynamics. I just want society to condemn the practice.

However, I really can't stand people who spank their kids in public. It is an act of violence that I do not have to see if I do not wish to. It offends my beliefs on the matter of raising kids. In the public you should not be able to do certain offensive things, like running around naked.

Therefore, I happen to believe that if you spank your kids in public, you should be slapped with a fine. Anyone else with me here?

Am I A New Cultural War Adversary?

Some people out there, surprisingly in the liberal side of the media, have said that I am a new type of cultural war adversary. The first time I saw this was in mid 2009.

I understand that somebody from a religious fundamentalist point of view may see me that way, but why a liberal? Because of my own mainly culture-based (rather than politics-based) movement to usher in a new era of more stable families, apparently. They did not like the fact that I wanted to support the idea of 'Till death do us part' becoming a literal contract for life once again.

Look, everybody can believe in different things, and if you are a liberal you should allow that. Obviously, I think they should see me as a fellow traveller in the movement to end racism and homophobia, rather than focus on my other beliefs which do not have anything to do with this agenda and belong in a totally different sphere than the political cultural war itself.

Volume Two

Chapter 4. The Freedom Platform

“I advocate a platform of freedom for all, both in terms of negative and positive freedom. I also advocate for things like clean living – but only in ways consistent with the platform. You see, either we have freedom for all, or we are all threatened by tyranny.”

Us vs Them, and Friendly Debate

One of my missions in life is to build a community of libertarians on social issues, people who will stand up for each others' freedom, despite not agreeing with each other's views and lifestyles.

This community will include both traditionalists and people who live alternative lifestyles.

It has been said that everyone has an 'us' and a 'them' - for me, my 'us' would be the whole of this community (including people who live alternative lifestyles), and my 'them' would be anybody who is anti-libertarian (even if they live a similar lifestyle to me). And it is important to me that this greater 'us' win the cultural war against 'them'.

Within the 'us', obviously we can have friendly debate. It is like the way every mature nation should behave, that all its citizens fight for the welfare of their country, but in everyday life within the said country people are still divided into different lifestyle-based sub-cultural groups and have debates with one another. This does not decrease the solidarity of the people, it

merely increases diversity.

One good example is my ongoing debate with people who live alternative lifestyles. I generally don't agree with the supposed merits of those lifestyles, and I am also very keen to ensure that (within the framework of the greater 'us' of libertarianism) I will be able to keep my community of traditionalist culture alive and well (and hopefully pass it onto the next generation), but that doesn't make those who live alternative lifestyles the 'them'.

A Community of (Social) Libertarians

I believe me, my friends and generally people in my cultural group will mature into a community of libertarians in the coming years. A community that will stand together for the freedom of all, and to support each others freedom in all social issues. We may have different lifestyles and different personal beliefs, but we believe freedom for all protects us all.

We will stand together on issues such as freedom from discrimination for private lifestyle matters, freedom in relationships and how to define marriage, and freedom of religion in a broad sense. We will stand by our own practices and rules, and refuse to assimilate into the anti-freedom mainstream culture. In this community there will be those who adhere to traditionalist lifestyles like me (I would say that I am more traditional than 70% of GenY at least), and those who adhere to 'alternative' lifestyles that I personally won't touch (and won't allow my children to touch in the future) but fully support the freedom for people to

follow if they so choose.

To build my political movement for freedom I need all of you, and in return I will do my best to bring my fellow traditionalists out of the folly of believing in excessive government power on social matters, and therefore help create a majority agreement on society leaving everybody alone to do their own thing.

The Way of the Social Libertarian

I am a proud libertarian on social issues, and have been since 2003. Why? I believe the concentration of power and its use against individuals will lead to discrimination (and hence social disadvantage) and loss of peace. It was the Bush years that taught me this lesson, but now that we are out of there I believe we should not forget it.

I am indeed a traditionalist personally on most cultural and lifestyle issues. Last time I checked, I loved country music and ballads and hated most hip-hop and heavy rock. Last time I checked, I prayed every day, and believed it is hard to be moral without being religious. Last time I checked, I was pro-life, pro decency, abstinent on alcohol, anti sexualisation in the media, pro-family, anti divorce, and firmly so, and was promoting my agenda everywhere to the upset of modern hippies. In short, everything that the right wing supports except racism and homophobia.

However, I detest the right wing's method of using government power to regulate everything. I do believe there should be laws

preventing unwanted exposure to offensive things in public (like people being naked in public), and protection of couples and children against unilateral divorce, but there's where it should end. Anti-abortion legislation has not achieved its desired result (just look at Georgia), and ancient institutions like marriage have been destroyed by political squabbles and the enactment of 'no fault divorce'. Our tax money has also unwillingly gone to pay for the Iraq war, church 'faith based' initiatives that promote homophobia, and the like.

Therefore, I believe in a combination of advocating and voting for pro-freedom socially policies on the political level, and promoting traditional values and morals (less the bigotry) in the social and cultural setting. Anyone with me here?

The Real Fix for Reactionarism

It seems that nowadays there are more and more reactionary people around. You really can't disagree that extreme ideologies like racism are on the rise. Having done a lot of study in why this is the case, I have come to the conclusion that the way the world has changed recently has been too much for many people.

And indeed it has. First of all, 1980s style Thatcherist economics are stupid and a complete return to Keynesian economic policies are in order. The economic miracle of the 1950s West was based on Keynesianism - when you are onto a good thing, you don't let it go easily. Sadly, the recession in the 1970s became an excuse to try out extremist, anti-human type policies. People have suffered too much because of the rise of the economic right, and I believe it is the responsibility of the major centre-left parties of the world to take us back onto the right track. A return to a pre-80s model of economics with no ifs, ands or buts is not radical, it is pro-human.

Secondly, I believe the right to live a traditionalist moral life has been eroded. Hence a lot of traditionalists have decided to wage war on all things progressive - which I believe is misguided, but sadly we must face the fact that this is happening. You see, us traditionalists really don't appreciate the in-your-face sexualisation of society, the putting down of the clean living ideal, the blaring of vulgar hip-hop music everywhere you go, and pressure applied against families that wish to be stable. Responding to us by calling us conservative (even I have been called that a few times!) and upping the action is not really going to help - we will not convert to the hippie agenda unfortunately. Obviously the multi-million dollar media business has its role here, and they should be our main target, but what we can do is to reaffirm the right of everyone not to be offended by oversexualisation and the lack of respect in society.

I am a social libertarian and I believe in freedom. Hence I support extending anti-discrimination to polyamorists (even if I don't agree with their lifestyle), and the decriminalisation of abortion by legislation for example. But to help people like me make the case for these amendments in the wider world to make

your life easier, you have to give us, the traditionalist majority, some respect too. Shoving it in our face doesn't help.

Separation of Church and State is Rule No 1

In my previous article, Love Religion But Defend Secularism, I outlined why I am an avid supporter of secularism. And I am not alone in being religious but supporting secularism - take France for example, a nation of religious Catholics who strongly defend their secular state.

Separation of church and state exists for a reason - otherwise each church will compete for a portion of the state and use it to disadvantage those who don't agree with it. Religion will then resemble politics at its worst - power struggles, majority oppressing the minority. The wall must be maintained at all cost - for the sake of religion.

I suggest that those of us who seek to maintain this separation follow this rule: refuse to deal with arguments that stem from purely religious dogma without suitable reasoning. This is sufficient to provide enough space for arguments against abortion for example

(everyone can see a fetus on ultrasound not just members of a particular religion) but still exclude ridiculous things like teaching somebody's version of creationism in schools.

This does not mean that we are not engaging religious people. I am a religious person myself. The idea is that we are open to all reasonable people who wish to talk, just not people who will fight for their dogma by force rather than persuasion.

Give Domestic Partnerships a Chance

Domestic Partnerships are simply this: a partnership that is 100% designed for family. Nothing else, not political arguments, not religious dogma, and not relating to age old traditions about wives being property. Recently it has been hijacked and twisted into a form of same-sex marriage lite. That's very unfair - it is NOT marriage lite, it is an institution similar to but also different from marriage. Another argument for equal marriage rights, I guess.

But back to the point. Domestic partnerships are stable family building blocks, and should be honored as equal to other stable family building blocks like marriage. In a time when we really need to encourage stable family building blocks, all such arrangements should be encouraged - including domestic partnerships.

Many states around the world have started to grant full couple rights for domestic partnerships - hopefully more will follow.

Freedom Above All Else!

The number one thing we should be aiming for and defending in a democracy is freedom. No freedom, no democracy, fascism etc. can rise up easily.

Forget about electing an efficient government, if the choice is between freedom and lack thereof. This includes not just economic freedom but also the freedom to believe and live as you believe. We must stand up for that freedom, at any cost.

There are many lifestyles out there that I don't agree with. But then, when it comes to governance, freedom comes first, and I stand by others' rights to live as they believe without difficulty.

Judicial Activism is a Myth

Let me say this out loud: judicial activism is a MYTH. In every nation with a bill of rights, judges are there to make sure that every piece of legislation is consistent with the nation's commitments to those rights, regardless of when it is applied to the majority or minorities. That some laws will and have to be struck down are because they are inconsistent with the constitution. Great statesmen would never argue with the court in such cases. They simply amend the legislation to make sure that it is consistent with the constitution.

Some conservatives think that judges are there to make things more libertine without the populace's consent. But what they are doing in every case is only to expand a right available already to the majority to minorities who have been excluded - rather than creating a new right altogether. This is making things more inclusive, not necessarily more libertine. (Consider that, for example, if nobody had a right to unilateral divorce as it probably should be in an ideal world, no court can change that. And there is nothing preventing parliament

from adopting such a law either.)

Support the Family that Supports Liberty

United we stand, divided we fall. As in all things, we need to be united in supporting each others' decisions to live out our lifestyle beliefs freely, or otherwise we will all lose that freedom.

Keep in mind that there are a lot of forces out there that seek to take away that freedom. Wingnuts who think that every community in the world should be made in the image of their own, for example. Religious fundamentalists who believe they have the right to shove their beliefs down our throats. However, when we, the diverse people and communities who share one common thing - believe in freedom - stand together, they have no way denting our freedom. We will not have to fear them.

Therefore, in regards to those who choose to live apart from clean living, whilst I personally will not consider for myself their lifestyle choices and would do my best to prevent my children from straying towards their cultural turf, I will still stand shoulder to shoulder with them in the

battle to ensure the lifestyle freedom of all of us, and hope that they, even though they are often wary of all clean living people, will accept my offer to stand together to fight the real threat to both of us.

The Problem with Populism

Put it simply - populism hurts. Ouch!
We thought it was ridiculous enough that back
in the 70s and 80s some self styled experts
suggested it was okay to smack children
against then-new advice from child
psychologists. Now former bullies are saying
that anti-bullying measures are no good for a
country's competitiveness. What a load of
crap!

That somebody can find an argument against
something doesn't mean that argument is valid.
For example, I have yet to see a valid
argument against same sex marriage. I have
never, ever seen one indeed, even though the
anti-equality people have made so much noise
already.

However, such populist challenges, which are
designed to attract those minds who haven't
seen the whole picture yet, can succeed by
preventing such minds from actually seeing the
whole picture ever, thus impeding the spread
of important ideas. For example, when I was
young I was taught that anyone who did not

subscribe to traditional marriage was not of family values. Obviously this is very false. But it took me more than a decade to find and accept the truth. Many more would not even bother to travel that difficult intellectual path.

Promises vs Results: Some Pro-Life Talk

It is well known that the biggest abortion decline in recent US history came about during the Clinton administration, with his policy that abortion should be safe, legal and rare. (The rate did continue to decline in the Bush years, but I just can't see that it was anything that Bush did - the Clinton policies were simply continuing to work).

Now to the 'Big-C Conservatives' who proclaimed themselves to be pro-life. They, however, also want to make sure that poor people did not have the means to raise a child properly in today's world. Their strategy is simple: just outlaw abortion. They don't seem to need to take care of the backyard abortion problem either. Just look at Poland: abortion officially outlawed, but a high rate of backyard abortion persist. Looks like these 'conservatives' are playing out of sight, out of mind rather than facing the reality.

I am not somebody who believes in

abortion-on-demand. However, I favour approaches that work. I can't endorse policy that comes from pure doctrine and doesn't stand up to common logic. Nor do I believe that we should take away people's right to do according to their conscience in controversial matters that don't have a clearly agreed on answer - for example, what to do in the case that the fetus is severely deformed, or what to do in the case that the mother's life is not threatened but her physical health (not emotional wellbeing) is irreversibly damaged by the pregnancy?

For the USA, I have nothing against repealing Roe vs Wade - but nor am I particularly excited by this prospect. However, beyond all this, we need to do what is effective - a living income for all, adequate childcare support, and all that. And this is what 'Big-C Conservatism' cannot deliver.

The New Principles of 'Small Government'

Traditionally, small government has been achieved with cost cuts, cutting programs to provide welfare to the needy, and being against basic health insurance for all. Yet these measures can be harmful to many people and hence the fabric of society itself.

I suggest a few other ways that small government can be brought about without using the above means:

-employing people who are already receiving welfare as much as possible. This will decrease the need for welfare naturally, without needing to resort to providing below-livable incomes for those on welfare. This is also good for private enterprise as it frees up more talent for the private sector to use. Since employing those on welfare is also usually cheaper, this can result in natural cost savings for the government.

-taking care of everybody's life so that every citizen is on a living income. From there, we can

free up the market as much as possible without needing to worry about tearing the fabric of society apart. Cutting tariffs to zero, ending all agricultural subsidies, and allowing the natural fading out of unsustainable industries in favour of imports should all be relatively easy by then.

-encourage multiculturalism, with the government a protector of peace and freedom amongst all members of society rather than an agent in culture itself. The government then will be by default powerless to control culture.

A New Approach to Government Employment

The government should try to employ every single unemployed person in the nation. This is what I believe.

This is not as hard to do as it seems. In most advanced countries the government already has a welfare system to look after the unemployed. The government can pay the welfare benefits as a wage and ask for work for them in return. This is important because while it is natural for private employers to look for what they see most fit to help them profit, it is the government's role in society to correct market failure, including to help those that private enterprise do not find useful.

This will also free up more talent for the private sector to choose from, which is also good for free enterprise.

Conservatism Failed Because It Is False Advertising

Conservatism says it is for freedom. They love to say how conservatism is based on libertarianism. Well, that seems quite like my approach - all the things I support are geared towards providing more freedom for people. Except that we actually are not fellow travellers politically. Why? Because conservatism, at least in its early 21st century incarnation, does not stand for freedom - not anymore. Not when it stand against freedom of religion, as in the denial of churches and religious organisations to marry same-sex couples in accordance with their doctrine.

I am told that I do share a few causes with the conservatives, time and time again. However, I would not trust that they would do anything for me in that area either. Why? Just look at their track record. Conservatism fought drugs, and drugs won. Conservatism fought divorce, and divorce won. Conservatism fought abortion, and abortion won. Conservatism fought crime, and crime won. Conservatism fought casual

sex, and casual sex won.

Need I say more? Conservatism has never delivered a bit of what they promised. Except for one thing - religious dogma. Why? Because for them, all the above are nice to have, but religious dogma is their goal. Conservatism in the 21st century is about one thing - the triumph of dogmatic, literalist interpretation of religion. No wonder conservatism, which promised so many wonderful things indeed, still failed, as seen by its support rate in the young generation today.

Chapter 5. An Adaptive Agenda for Families

“My idea for families is to encourage strong and stable families everywhere. This is what’s going to be best for everyone.”

The End of Radicalism

The recent success of marriage equality in California and other parts of the world are to be celebrated - not just because they bring justice to gay and lesbian people, but because they are the end of one toxic era and the beginning of a healthy era of progress.

In the 1950s the Western world was all about family values, but many minorities were mistreated, sadly. Then in the 1960s, the plight of those minorities came to mainstream focus and things started to improve. It would almost be the beginning of the golden era, if not for something else happening - the Vietnam War. The War, and particularly conscription, caused many young people to become disillusioned with the future. Many turned to casual sex and experimentation with mind-altering substances. There were always radicals who loved to do these things (even in the 19th century) though they were never mainstream. Now that even mainstream college students were living their brand of 'liberation', these radicals decided to style themselves as the new progressives and take their anti-family cause to the mainstream.

I grew up in the 1990s when their influence was still felt - hence I stood firmly with conservatism when I was younger. Whilst people like Bill Clinton were entirely sensible, some elements of the 'progressives' were just too scary back then. Maybe other people of that era did the same for the same reason.

But by the 2000s the radicals had gone back into where they once came from - the margins. Long since they lost the support of women and ethnic minorities and sensible progressives like Clinton, now no longer could they count on the support of gay and lesbian people either, the last major oppressed minority in society, as they too decided to embrace family values. It was no coincidence that the cry for equal marriage came of age in the 2000s.

The radicals' last act was to attack Generation Y by saying that we were the most conservative generation since the 1950s, since they knew we were going to be the first generation who would turn our backs on them since the baby boomers. Their negative stereotyping of us failed, and now they are increasingly becoming irrelevant.

Let's Talk About This...

I have supported equal marriage ardently since 2003. In 2003, as now, I understood marriage to be a lifelong monogamous union of two people. Since I believe it is ideal for everyone to have a lifelong monogamous union, I decided it was an issue I had to morally take up. I have encouraged equal marriage both from equal rights and social integration points of view, believing that both are equally important.

However, something disturbing has been happening more and more since then. More and more, I see some gay people (usually men) saying that they are different and they want different rules. They want to be able to not have the monogamy part of it. Recently I have even read an article about such ideas - they call them the 'San Francisco relationship' (please don't destroy the reputation of that place, people).

This is something that I can never, ever support. And when I say never, I mean never. I can never morally bring myself to support

something that will destroy the family. I believe the majority of the equal marriage movement is with me, and I believe we should make this point clear.

Protect the Family - Privatise Marriage Today!

I am 100% pro-marriage privatization. And if you support freedom, I believe you should do that too. For governments to define cultural institutions is just too statist for me.

This is the most common example cited: Conservative churches believe that marriage is their province, not the states. Guess what? Gay and lesbian couples think that marriage is their province, not the state's either. It is an option that is both tolerant and conservative therefore.

But it is not just the marriage equality problem that marriage privatization can benefit. Once upon a time, marriage was always for life. Until the state seized control of the institution, and centuries later legislated for no-fault divorce. Now the possibility of divorce is written into the very contract of marriage itself. The state has destroyed marriage.

And if we support marriage privatisation and cannot force ourselves to be defined by a

state-sponsored institution in the most important union in our lives, what can we do? Advocate for marriage privatisation. Don't give up commitment though.

Wake Up, It's Not the 1960s Anymore

In the 1960s and 70s there were weird movements like 'free love', hippies, radical feminists rejecting the family and hating men, and the like. And we all know what the results were. The AIDS crisis of the 80s killed many from a generation, and had the most severe impact on vulnerable minorities like the LGBT and certain ethnic communities. The hippie communes have largely disappeared without making much impact. Radical feminism has been rejected by most of our generation, and seen as actually conservative in many circles too. The family still won out as the best institution to live your life in.

I thought everybody had accepted that whilst it is good to have freedom and equality, the white picket fence lifestyle is the best without peer. I thought that we had agreed that whilst we continue to rally against discrimination, injustice, war and poverty, we aim to make the family lifestyle available to everyone.

Which is why I am surprised that recently I have encountered a few people who think that this is still the 1960s and that people like me are still considered ancient. No, we have found out the best way to live. And it's you, not us, that are ancient in 2010.

The Alternative to Censorship

I have previously said that I would prefer to live in a culture without obscenity flying around everywhere. I want the same for my family. I believe many want the same.

Some have turned to arguing for more government censorship. But due to the current political climate, that could be quite a double-edged sword easily abused by the religious right.

Therefore, I believe the better way is by building your own culture around entertainment and inspiration you find suitable, and then sharing it with others who want to live the same way. The religious right have done so successfully for decades, so why shouldn't we?

The Future. Our Futures.

We do not know what the future holds. Yet we know one thing: our future generations will have to live in it.

Today we still know what is family, what is tolerance and equality, and what is peace. Will future generations know such concepts? Only if we keep them alive.

We can't always control the outside world, but we can always try to create a culture that embodies these concepts, shared amongst families who believe in these concepts.

When It's Family vs Fundamentalist Religion

Religious fundamentalists often hide behind the veneer of family values. But what if valuing your family contradicts the dogma of fundamentalist religion? Their record on this is pretty clear.

Unless you think that cutting off a gay family member is consistent with valuing your family, it is clear which way they choose when it comes to family vs religion.

I personally value family above all else, including ALL religious dogma (including those from the religion I am raised up in). Family is more important than religious dogma to me, and if the two conflicted with each other, it is always the latter that will give way. Can you make the same commitment?

A Relationship of a Couple of Couples

More and more places around the world are starting to respect the right of gay and lesbian couples to access artificial reproduction services. This is a very great thing, I believe, as the basic human right to found a family is more important than even equal marriage itself, I believe.

However, the situation still leaves many people out. For example, gay dads generally only have surrogacy as a choice to parenthood, and this is not an option for most people (how many altruistic surrogates are there out there?). Similarly, many lesbian mothers are finding sperm donors harder to come by these days with anonymous sperm donation increasingly restricted.

Which leaves me to another idea - there could be a non-intimate couple relationship between a gay couple and a lesbian couple. Within that relationship, all four will have parenting rights. This way, potentially every same-sex couple

can live a family life.

Equality should mean more than just nominal equality. It should mean that we all get an equal opportunity to live the white picket fence lifestyle, which I believe to be the only ideal lifestyle.

Facebook Divorces: New Challenges Posed by the New World

It's sad but true: marriage counsellors are citing social networks as a reason for increasing separations and divorces. One of the reasons they say is because bored middle-aged people are reconnecting with their previous partners. Divorce law firms also said that facebook has been cited in a proportion of their cases last year.

The new world brings new possibilities. Whilst some of these are good, others are not quite so good. These not so good ones can include bitter challenges to otherwise happy families. In the face of these challenges, I believe we need to really look into strengthening the basis for relationships and families. The 'we can always divorce if we grow apart' attitude of the last 40 years is just not sustainable anymore. A new cultural paradigm needs to grow out of this crisis.

Family Rights is Good Policy for All

Let's talk about an important issue: supporting families' rights to keep themselves intact and away from those who may harm them even out of good intentions.

The issue of legislating to prevent governments from abusing power and taking children away from families that they merely don't approve of (rather than as a last resort to prevent physical harm) is often seen as a side issue. However, it should be an issue everybody should be concerned about.

Many otherwise idealistic progressives feel that there is nothing wrong with the current powers government have over families. However, in more conservative jurisdictions (where they don't live anyway) parenting rights have been taken away because of sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination, for example. Therefore, there is a very progressive stake in protecting family rights as much as we can. Therefore, making the government give back

parenting rights to families is something which everyone, no matter their political views, should embrace.

The New Concept of Family

I have always supported the idea that family should include not just people that are immediately biologically linked, but also people who choose to be linked for life, and their next generations to be linked too. This practice actually goes back a long way in my culture, with Chinese men vowing to be brothers for life being a common practice in ancient China.

We used to take this pretty seriously in ancient China. I believe it's time that we start to take this more seriously, and formally - especially in an age where we are so lacking in permanent connections with other people.

This new concept of family can have other benefits too. For example, under current adoption practices, in many cultures adoptions can only take place if the relationship with the biological parents are severed. Therefore, you cannot become an extra mom/dad to a kid who already has two parents. However, a new, 'biological plus chosen' based family can cater for this variation.

Parents Who Hurt their own Children

I really have to talk about something really sad, yet we should really face and change.

Some parents deliberately psychologically hurt their own children as 'punishment' just to get their point across. That may involve giving them severe corporal punishment (anything that actually terrifies the child) or destroying their favourite toy. I believe that as a parent, you should never do that - that is akin to child abuse. We should classify that as child abuse - for the sake of the future of our world.

Children who grow up from this sort of household grow up to not know what true love is and how the world can be based on love.

They often become vindictive individuals - even if they don't actually act vindictively to society they still harbour those feelings, and I believe that's why there are so many loveless people out there in the world. Whilst these people continue to control a significant proportion of the world, the problems of our world can never be fixed.

If we want to change the world tomorrow, we need to change the parents out there today first.

The Ideal Visions of Our Generation

It was around 1999-2000 that our generation began to receive attention from the mainstream media. At that time they were hopeful that we were going to be a clean living generation, finally putting the drug, sex and rock and roll of past generations of youth behind us. We were seen as potentially the most family orientated generation for some time.

Our generation was then described as unusually optimistic, seeing that even 911 and economic downturns didn't affect our optimism for building a better world. It was also seen that globalisation and suspicion of hierarchy was firmly rooted in our upbringing. Unlike the youth who came before us, we were not cynical, and could not be made cynical either.

By 2004 when the cultural wars reached a peak, another hopeful point about our generation emerged: that most of us, even the traditionalist ones (myself included), were

inclined to support equal rights for minorities, and most of us voted against dogmatic fundamentalists in elections around the world. Very soon polls would confirm that the majority of us support things like gay marriage.

Later on it would also be noticed that we were the most politically active youth since the youth of the 1960s. We combined our activism with our use of technology. The participation of our generation in elections like the US 2008 election made this apparent for the world to see. Not everybody in my generation would embody the above characteristics. However, these are ideals that I am proud to aspire to, and I would be proud to show the world that these are the great values that many of today's young people stand for.

Show the World there is No Need to Fear

As we champion for equal rights for everybody in society regardless of age, race, gender (which incorporates gender identity and sexual orientation in my view), and cultural background, we often find that the biggest hurdle is the fear of some people who believe this will be the end of stable, healthy society as we know it, society as we have lived throughout history.

Which is complete nonsense, most of us know. But still, we are having a hard time explaining this to those sceptics. However, there is a way - we can prove it. We can create an even more healthy society than the discriminatory version that dogmatic Big-C Conservatives offer as their alternative - we can beat them at their game, and still promote tolerance and equality.

We can create a culture with even more stable family structures than what they can dream of (presently, those theocons are doing nothing

about the divorce rate, the single most important factor in the current epidemic of family instability, nor are they doing anything about adultery). By creating a culture of transparency, we can create a culture where family members never have something to hide from one another, and where clean living is a real thing rather than a facade people put on and later found to be just that (Britney style). By making sure every child brought into this world as well as their parents will be adequately supported, we can drop the abortion rate to near zero and also reverse the birth rate decline.

To do all of the above would be in no way contradictory to equal rights for all, an improvement of civil rights and a strong tradition of liberty, multiculturalism and interfaith harmony, a job guarantee program and a health insurance program by the government. It will also show that you CAN create your own healthy culture of your vision WITHOUT forcing the rest of the world along, something dogmatic conservatives seem to forget all the time.

(**NOTE: I am not saying such a culture should be compulsory - it is entirely voluntary. But still

the attempt to build such a culture, which I am engaged in every day, will prove my point, even if it is not the mainstream culture of society.)

If You Take Illicit Drugs, At Least Consider This

That the supply of the drugs you take is likely to come from gangs doing dirty work.

That people have been executed for transporting the substance around the world.

Aren't these reasons to stop people from taking those things - not that they are any good for your health either?

Uneasy Facts We Must Face

So many people out there claim to be trying to protect the family, the basis unit of society itself, from forces that will destroy it. Which sounds like a noble cause. But then, who really has been trying to do this? Politicians have been known to start movements in the name of one thing whilst serving the purpose of another.

In Western countries today, one of the biggest groups who claim to be protecting the family unit are those seeking to legislate against gay rights and gay marriage. However, their arguments make no sense at all. Gay and lesbian people comprise of about 2% of society, and any policy to do with a minority this small will not have a noticeable effect in the composition or conventions of society. The only effect gay rights will have on society is to reaffirm its commitment to tolerance and equality for all. Furthermore, the current crisis of family breakdown began long before the gay rights debate, and so far, countries that have attained full gay equality in law have not seen an impact on the health of their families. This just shows that the health of families in society

as a whole are mainly the product of the 98% heterosexual population, and to scapegoat gay and lesbian people is just plain wrong.

Obviously, we need to target the solution at where the problem is. In this case, since the problem is not with gay rights, being opposed to gay rights will fix nothing for the health of families. I guess measures to save relationships from divorce (for example by increasing availability of family therapy), to make cheating on a spouse socially more unacceptable (through cultural campaigns), combined with adequate social welfare, and legislation for reasonable working hours for all, will go a much longer way. These are simple answers that have always been there - just not easy ones.

My Theory of Attraction

We are all attracted to more than one person throughout our lives. Whilst some people, after they have found their partner for life, stop being attracted to other people romantically, others still have outside attractions. Science tells us there is nothing abnormal about this phenomenon. However, sometimes it leads to unfaithfulness and, ultimately, breakdown of family. Which is good for nobody. Some people who know that they are like this have opted for the 'open-marriage', but then I have not seen it work very often either.

I doubt that people who remain attracted to others even after finding their lifetime partner can change much of that voluntarily, from the anecdotes I have heard. However, they can use their attraction in other ways that will prevent family breakdown. Here is what I think might work for them: they can try to find a partner who is also like them (in that they both know that they would continue to have outside attractions). They should see the partnership as the ultimate, unbreakable unit that defines their relationships in their lives. Then they can get

lovingly (but not sexually) involved with other similar couples (not singles who have a potential to create a triangle) on a couple basis. That way, the couple unit remains of paramount importance, lifelong monogamy is maintained, and threats of a triangle forming and separation happening because of that are resisted. This may even be a good way to bring two families together for life!

Why Traditionalists Should Support Multiculturalism Too

Some traditionalists think that multiculturalism, especially if practised in their own country, would destroy their way of life. Nothing can be more true.

Multiculturalism does mean that society has to be tolerant towards people of different races, cultural backgrounds and lifestyle practices - including your own. The opposite of multiculturalism is that dreaded A-word: assimilationism - the dangerous concept that everybody should behave and act like the rest of society.

I happen to be a what I call an 'extendable traditionalist'*¹. Here are some of my beliefs (which I live my life by but won't force onto anybody): I don't believe that sex outside of that relationship at any time is an option for me at all, I don't believe that I should consume mind-altering substances for recreation or 'experimentation', I don't believe in dressing 'sexily'. That would definitely put me outside the

mainstream of my generation. If a policy of assimilation were forced against me - does it mean that I need to give up these beliefs and the lifestyles associated with it?

(*An 'extendable traditionalist' is somebody who supports traditions in general, for example with family values favouring stable relationships and families, but who believes that traditional institutions should be extended to accommodate for objectives such as equality between the sexes and equality for LGBTIs).

The Guidelines of Pro Family

I once read this in a book about America: life in America is about following rules, and there are indeed quite a lot of rules to be followed. But you also get to enjoy a lot of freedom too - as long as you obey the rules. In fact, many of those rules keep us safe, and therefore free to have our freedom. The important thing is that, as long as you obey the rules, you should be fine to do whatever you like with your life. Unlike in some other places, where unless things are specifically allowed, they are at risk of being disallowed at whim. The former fosters a creative and vibrant society, the latter is stifling.

Therefore, I want to initiate a movement to establish certain rules for being pro-family, and as long as you abide by these rules, the rest of your personal life is your freedom. I think the basic rules should be:

- 1) You are willing to establish a permanent relationship with one person during your lifetime, and your sexual relationships will be limited to only this person. (This does not, for example, exclude polyamory per se, as you can be

attracted to and love more than one person on a long term basis - just not have a sexual relationship with them).

- 2) You are willing to care for and, wherever possible, provide for your family. You will not sacrifice your family to a significant extent for example for work commitments on a long term basis.
- 3) You are willing to help maintain and strive for a public popular culture free of vulgarity and sex, for the sake of our children. (Again, I don't care how your private sex life is, you're good in my books as long as you help maintain the integrity of the culture in our public spaces). I guess that maintains a clear way to lead a pro-family life, whilst allowing quite a lot of freedom to be either traditionalist or more experimental.

Ideas for Better Families in the Contemporary Context

Some people, including me, think that there is a major problem with the health of families. The major problem is that there is no major workable solution to that right now. Meanwhile, kids all over the world continue to suffer.

Therefore, here I propose some new ideas that may work:

The modern extended family

It is my belief that when families are small, individuals are disempowered. Unfortunately, in the modern world not everyone can live in a traditional extended family. However, the concept of the extended family can equally be transported to the modern world by including non-biological relationships (e.g. ceremonial brothers and sisters) in families. In fact, such relationships have been well honoured in places like ancient China for a long time!

Anticipating possible separation and prevent its bad effects on family

Face it, high separation rates are the fact of life everywhere in the West, and it is not going away soon. While we cannot change this fact, we can possibly prevent its worse effects from being exerted onto children.

Separating partners who have between them a biological or adopted child should try to maintain a relationship even after they are no longer a couple. An agreement by the separating partners to stay together, with contact assisted by other friends and relatives can be the solution. Obviously, big families (including the modern extended family as described above) would be more suitable for that, but any family can do that, really. For a couple that is likely to separate (like those who sign pre-nuptials in the expectation that there is a real chance separation may happen) should also pre-emptively work out how, if in the event of separation, their children can still be guaranteed a good childhood and upbringing.

Differentiation for people looking for permanent commitment as opposed to those who don't mind separation if things do not work out

There are two camps of people out there, and that is a fact we must face. Pretending that they are the same would only jeopardise everybody. Those who take separation as a real possibility should have a chance to plan their relationship including that

possibility. On the other hand, those who want the traditional forever should be able to know that they have found a partner who hold the same view on life and will not easily separate and 'find better' even if things don't work out well, so that they can plan a path that stretches 'till death do us part'. (I am of the latter camp, just for reference).

{Note: consistent with the point below, we are NOT advocating snobbery or differential treatment here, just people with different beliefs seeking their own kind}

Equality of all loving relationships, regardless of sexuality or governmental status

All this can only work if all loving relationships are respected equally. Snobbery in any way will cause people to shun some forms of commitment for some reason other than their real beliefs, and there will be pressure for people to act in ways that are not best for themselves. If you want to know where this will end up, just look at the number of middle aged gay guys who were pressured into heterosexual marriages years past, ultimately coming out in middle age, and leaving behind a shattered family.

No bowing to dogmatists or fundamentalists in doing what is potentially best for families

These people can live the life they like, and they can be sure that they will have the freedom and respect

from us to do so. However, they cannot breathe fear into all of our plans to move forward on a very important issue. Their 1950s styled manual for family is proving quite unsuitable for many others (expectedly), and our attempts at making change should not have to pander to their concerns, if the concerns are baseless (just like how gay marriage will supposedly undermine marriage - they can't tell us why, so why should we have to argue with them?).

Please Extend the Family Spirit to the Less Fortunate Ones

While we here sit here and talk about how we would like to build great, loving families of our own and turn the wider world into one too, we have to remember that many people are still struggling with misguided hate directed at them every day. In the worst case this can come from family members or close associates even, for example in the event somebody comes out as sexually diverse. May families still don't have the idea that helping each other achieve their dreams is important, and instead are still trying to impose the traditional hierarchy's wishes on the less empowered members.

If we are serious about making this world into a great, loving family, we must try to reach out to these people, and make sure our efforts really get there. When one of them comes to us and ask for help, we must be able to extend it, and introduce them to the great family of anti-hate people that is there waiting for them. Every little bit of work helps.

Alternative to Nuclearism: Why

What is nuclearism and why don't we like it?

Nuclearism is putting the nuclear family up as the only model family and that society should be built around it. Assertions that the nuclear family is necessarily the best building block for society are wrong. I believe that while the family is the building block of society, the nuclear family focused culture has not fulfilled this role well at all.

The nuclear family only focus partly or wholly is responsible for many of the woes of both traditionalists and progressives. When you come to think of it, because the nuclear family is much inferior to a bigger family in absorbing stress, high rates of separation, family trauma, abortions and intergenerational conflict is bound to happen. Due to the low number of adults in each family, the structure of the nuclear family is more or less fixed and there are only so many roles there, and it is therefore less versatile than the big family. Models of the nuclear family therefore favour fixed, rigid roles. This rigidity is sometimes the reason for opposition to gay marriages, for example.

This is not to say that we don't like the nuclear family. We just believe that societies shouldn't be built on it solely.

Chapter 6. An Adaptive Vision for Culture

“I am a creator of culture by definition, one of many in this world. And this is what I have to say to add to the ongoing conversation about culture, both in my own sub-culture and the mainstream culture.”

Building the Liberal Country Music Base

I think everyone out there agrees that country music, particularly the American form, needs more support from the liberals lest conservatives become able to politically control what singers can publicly say.

Take the Dixie Chicks for example, first grade fine musicians, now ruined because the conservative country stations won't play them anymore. Or even take Carrie Underwood, who was criticized for supporting an anti-hunting group, as if being kind to animals were wrong (we all know her track record of supporting kindness to animals - I certainly can't match that myself personally).

And in case you think country music isn't worth your time - just try to listen to some. It's much more worth listening to than the likes of Lady Gaga and Katy Perry, I believe.

Support and Criticism Go Together

Okay, I do support gay marriage. I fully support equal rights for gay people.

However, here is one fact that I cannot gloss over at all - that 'straight acting', masculine gay men are often unkind to feminine gay men, more so than many straight people. On the other side, there are feminists who say they are for gender liberation, yet whilst they do a lot for masculine women's freedom, they don't care about feminine men much either.

The gay community is known in the mainstream for acceptance of freedom of gender behaviour and identification, yet the behaviour of many people I have seen from that community do not hold up to this ideal at all. These people's views on gender behaviour are clearly more similar to those of the ex-gay community they so loathe than to what I'd expect from them.

It is an issue we really need to address.

Putting Perspective on Historical Homophobia

Historically, most cultures were homophobic. This is a fact that conservatives have used to justify their continued homophobia. However, let's put this fact in the light of the context. Until recent decades, homosexuality was assumed to be not a natural sexual orientation. As a persecuted minorities, gays often practiced their homosexuality under cover of a heterosexual marriage, further reinforcing this idea. Homosexuality was thus seen as having additional, extramarital relationships that come from lustful desires that are unnatural. Obviously, most people do view having additional, extramarital relationships that come from lustful desires that are unnatural to be immoral.

Now, we have found that homosexuality is a natural sexual orientation, and one can be a committed lifelong monogamous person even if one is homosexual. Therefore, the idea that homosexuality is having additional, extramarital relationships that come from lustful desires that

are unnatural is discredited. Thus homophobia itself should have been discredited too.

A Brave Idea I Have: Let's Start From the 1950s Again

Whilst the progress in equality of the last 60 years has brought enormous benefit to almost every section of the community, there now appears to be certain failings that make full progress in that area hard to achieve. For example, the rise of the populist far right in certain countries, and the continued popular refusal of legal same-sex marriage points to this. Which means it may be a time for a rethink. What do we actually stand for? We stand for equal opportunity and tolerance. How can we apply these principles more broadly, and make them connect with more people? This sort of rethink has been taking place everywhere. However, it has not been very successful either.

A more basic rethink may rather start like this, however. Let's think back to the 1950s, before the progress even started. What do we need to change from 1950s society to the ideals that we stand for? Focus on getting those changes out, and really focus. Focus on communicating those changes that we really should stand for,

rather than the assortment of campaign baggage that have arose in the past five decades.

For example, multicultural and interfaith tolerance and LGBT rights are essential, but the change in family composition is not (except for equal gender rights and support for LGBT families - but there can still be stable families with these things in mind). Whilst I would not advocate for government to get involved in the latter either due to the risk of other repercussions, we should not, in my opinion, oppose those who don't tolerate the radical change in family composition, for this change is not really part of our agenda. We should, however, spend every ounce of energy showing that we totally disagree with those who are racist and homophobic, for they stand for the very antithesis to our movement. They are the very ones standing in the way of reaching our ideal vision of society.

Other things that should never have been part of our program include blanket no fault divorce, a fundamentalist pro-choice position in regards to abortions, the tolerance of inappropriately talking about sex in our culture, and the rise (and even celebration) of recreational drug

use. The quicker we shed this baggage decisively and publicly, the quicker we get to connect with potential supporters who are prevented from supporting our causes by having a biased view of what we stand for.

The New Generation Ethos of Egalitarianism

Once upon a time people were greatly divided by social (not economic) class, and all institutions and manners in society were tied into this system. Nowadays this system has been much relaxed in most (but not all) areas. This is because the work of generations past in eroding this stifling system.

Our generation may just be the one that will make a mark in history making a major step towards social egalitarianism.

Why? Because all of us were taught that we were great and could expect great futures when we were young. Because none of us would want to be at the bottom of the hierarchy, and therefore none of us would want to be the very people who make the hierarchy possible.

These values are already making an impact in places and spaces where our generation is dominant. We just need to create more new

cultural phenomena and institutions with these values, which will then come to dominate life in this world.

Towards a New Traditionalism, MultiTraditionalism

Once, when all the cultures were separate, what was 'traditionalism' was very clear in each culture. However, with the advent of globalisation and the natural result of global multiculturalism, what is traditional to one person now may not be traditional to another. When followers of one tradition decide that they should triumph over and destroy another tradition, tragedy results. This has led some to abandon tradition altogether.

However, lets step back and think. The reason why we cherish tradition is because it is tried and true and brings good things into this world. Therefore, we should be able to cherish all the traditions of everyone. In fact, we may be able to learn a bit more about the ideal way this way.

Therefore, I suggest that those traditionalists amongst us who respect and are willing to learn from other traditions to enrich our own (as opposed to close-minded reactionary Big-C

Conservatives) distinguish ourselves and speak up on the issue. I suggest we call ourselves multitraditionalists.

Calling and Supporting Bilingualists Everywhere!

I am a proud bilingualist myself - I have been using both English and Chinese from a young age. I believe that there is a certain advantage about being brought up with a bilingual language framework, and thinking in two (or more) languages adds a certain special dimension to your thoughts.

Therefore, I encourage people worldwide to learn a second language and become bilingualists - or better still - for parents to educate their children in two languages from a young age.

A Healthy Culture for the Future

I wish that the children of our generation will have a healthy culture to grow up in. After all, this is the wish of many thinking adults across the world.

As to what is 'a healthy culture' - well, we can argue endlessly and we will not get an answer. So I think, for the sake of peace, we should agree to disagree - for now. There is no need to conclude the argument right now. The best solutions will be clear when at least two generations have passed from now.

What we need to do is to build the culture that we want our next generation to grow up in. We need to lend our help to bring to the culture out there justice, peace, equality and compassion. Sometimes we do that by movements to bring the world forward together. But then, sometimes, you cannot change everybody, and you should just build your culture from within a group of like-minded people and do your best to promote it.

The culture that I want to build is four-fold: a

culture of equality and justice for everyone, a clean living lifestyle away from substances of abuse and sexualisation, a culture of achieving spiritual progress and moral living through interfaith goodwill and pluralism of religious backgrounds, and a culture that allows an individual to express themselves and be whoever they want to be. The first I would aim to bring to the whole world on a movemental basis - for example, through my support of the welfare state, good working conditions for all, marriage equality and the like. The latter three, however, I don't believe we can force onto everybody just yet. Therefore, I am striving to build a community with these values, still connected to the greater world, but definitely committed to these values beyond what is mainstream out there. I believe time will vindicate us - maybe in two or three generations' time - and people from other lifestyles and cultures will start to follow our example.

This, is The Challenge Our Generation Must Face

Many people say climatic change is the #1 issue of our time. I really have to disagree - not because climate change is not important, but because there is one bigger, overarching issue that is the #1 issue of our time.

The conservative fundamentalists.

Over the past 50 or so years, it has been shown that racism, homophobia, sexism, and the like has no good purpose in society nor any rational basis, and only serves to create hurt and conflict. Those of us who have listened to this message, the majority of us, eventually backed away from those ideas and came to abhor them. But a small but significant minority of people continued to hold steadfastly to those beliefs. Mostly they have used their religion to justify it, be it whatever religion. Over time they became what they self-describe as the conservative religious, but what I would call the conservative fundamentalists.

Now we are on the verge of erasing the errors of racism, homophobia, sexism and the like, and the conservative fundamentalists really do not like the idea. Hence they have pushed back at our society using tactics from terrorism to opposing equal rights on legislation to prevent us from reaching our goal, once and for all. Sometimes they have succeeded, for example in the Middle East by recruiting youth who are anti-West and turning them into terrorists, or people in the West who harbour a grudge against the mainstream and turning them into foot-soldiers to oppose every bit of equality we need to legislate for.

The real challenge is to put these people back in their place. The way to this is to make sure that the public knows what the real choice is - between enlightened values that lead to justice and peace for all, or archaic values that take us back to the dark old ages of warfare, abuse and unhealthy society.

Justice and Equality are Not Against Traditions

Some people out there are blaming us, people who want to seek freedom and equality for everyone, as 'trying to destroy traditions'. I really cannot agree. What we are doing does nothing to destroy tradition as such. For example, legislating for gay marriage does next to nothing to affect the structure of families in society as a whole, because it affects only about 2% of the population anyway. Striving for progress on these things is an occupation built solely on the belief that society should be just and equal.

And if you want to bring back great traditions, or more accurately promote traditional ideals that have never been quite well achieved yet (which is a more realistic thing to say of most traditional ideals, from the healthy, stable family, to benevolent religion), then you could only do that on a society that is just and equal. Think again. If a society and the relationships in it were just and equal, I guess there is a greater opportunity for stability in families. There would

be no need for mind-altering drugs. People would place greater hope in everyday life and maintaining the wellbeing of their communities then seeking satisfaction through sexual stimulation.

Creating a Culture of Rapidly Developing New Ideas

A culture where ideas are rapidly developed and applied and assessed is one which progress is fast. It is my wish that the internet will create an opportunity for this kind of culture to flourish.

To enable this, people should be unafraid to experiment with ideas in their life that could potentially make life better. Then we should share these experiences with others on the web. Hopefully, enough self made stars who do these will get a voice in the internet media.

Websites that feature self made stars (rather than just Hollywood-promoted celebs) could perhaps facilitate this. This way, ideas could get developed, tested and disseminated quickly. Of course, with the right model must come the right use. My hope is that this model will be used to advance the causes of peace, compassion, tolerance and love.

The Real Revolution for Freedom

For many people in the West, the revolution began some time in the 1960s. Not the industrial revolution, democracy revolution, capitalist or socialist revolution, but the big one - the revolution for freedom. The radical idea that people should be able to determine their destiny, that historically held social roles and prejudices were restricting and should be done away with, finally started to become reality.

But we need to work hard still, for this revolution still has a long way to go, at least in some areas. Too many people have dwelled on the by-products of the revolution - that nobody can judge your sex life or personal substance use, to remember that the revolution has an important purpose - freedom for each individual ultimately to do the right thing by themselves.

What we need to work on is to work hard to knock down traditional cultural stereotypes. Enforced gender roles, racism and homophobia, that all has to go. True freedom is achieved when you are really free to be

anything you want to be (as long as you are not harming anybody) - and that condition can only arrive when enforced roles, views and disadvantages are removed. It really is a radical idea - just like democracy once was.

New Guidelines for Decent Presentation

Traditional formal presentation is often cumbersome, disregarding of individual identity and cultural differences, and gender stereotyped. Therefore, I believe the scope of 'decent presentation' should be widened to cover these factors. Once again, I am suggesting a guideline for what should constitute 'decent dress' in the 21st century:

- 1) Conformity is not required - feel free to express yourself
- 2) Most of your body below the neck should be covered
- 3) There is nothing vulgar written or implied on any items of clothing
- 4) No sexual idea of theme is implied in the overall presentation

I think that should suffice to say somebody has been dressing decently.

A Way to Replace Conservatism

You all know that I am opposed to conservatism and seek to replace the very idea of conservatism itself with more helpful concepts. Well, here's one thing that will help replace 'the conservatism' and help liberate everybody.

Traditionally, 'conservative values' are sold as a package. The usual conservative package includes such things as lifelong monogamy and abstaining from experimentation with mind-altering substances, but also things such as racism, heteronormativity, homophobia, a lack of regard for peace, and a lack of appreciation for the need of social welfare, as well as blind belief in 'what we have always done in the past' and possibly 'religious fundamentalism'.

I believe the conservative package has only survived because of things like lifelong monogamy and abstaining from experimentation with mind-altering substances are attractive to many people and provide for the foundation for strong family values and a

productive society. Therefore, to make sure the conservative package fails, we need to provide an alternative that provides the good things it provides, but replacing the bad things with freedom and true morality.

Therefore, I have started out by creating essential guidelines to achieve the same goals that conservatism has helped people achieve in the past. Goals like living a good family-orientated life, for example. You should be able to achieve them without adhering to the conservative package at all.

Drop into Alternative Society whilst living in the Mainstream Society

Back in the 1960s and 70s they said that you had to drop out of mainstream society in order to live an 'alternative' life.

But in a true multiculturalist society based on freedom and mutual respect, we do not really have to do that. We should be able to live together in the so-called mainstream whilst each pursuing very different lives living out each of our different ideals. We should be able to choose to maintain networks with those who share a similar culture and lifestyle to ourselves whilst not entirely isolating ourselves.

Therefore, 'to drop out' is not the best solution anymore. It is so old fashioned now that we may start to consider it the 'old-fashioned' way. The new way is to be different, visibly different, and unafraid to live your life differently.

The Responsibility to Reproduce

This is controversial, but important. Only read on if you have an open mind

I am going to advocate that, every couple who has the ability to reproduce, should have the responsibility to have kids, and they should have at least three kids if they can.

I know this is going to step on a lot of toes, but let me say this because I have important reasons for wanting this to happen. Some politicians have advocated the same idea ('one for mom, one for dad, and one for the country') but they are saying this just out of fear of population decline. My reasons for advocating people to have kids is much more than that.

In recent decades, with the availability of birth control, some populations have decided not to reproduce, or not to reproduce as much. If equal numbers of every social, cultural and temperamental group are represented in this voluntary giving up of reproduction, then there would be nothing to worry about. Sadly, for

whatever reason, this has centered around people of particular convictions and ideology, and likely to be centered around people of particular natural predispositions too.

They may think they are smart to 'not let their world be hindered by children' (this is how they put it even though I fundamentally disagree), but in reality they give up their chance to contribute to the gene pool.

But if somebody is voluntarily giving up their chance to contribute to the gene pool, then why am I still saying that they should have a responsibility to reproduce? It is simply that, your genes are not just yours, but what nature and past generations have given you.

Therefore, you should do your best to ensure they survive. Because if certain genes that could otherwise do very well dwindle to a small number because of human decisions not to let them proliferate, then other genes get to be more dominant than they actually should be, and that may cause a problem for our world's future.

NOTE: This is a general thought that I have, and I am NOT going to disrespect any child-free person because of this. This piece is intended to

share and develop an idea, not to upset child-free-by-choice individuals.

We must win the disciplining battle

There is now a war of how to discipline your kids. On one side are those that favour condemning corporal punishment to the wastebasket of history, and on the other side are those who are in favour of keeping it.

Needless to say, I am in favour of banishing corporal punishment. However, just like with any ideological war, we need to win our case. And we can only win our case by providing real results - well adjusted, law abiding teenagers and adults. There is a problem with how teenagers are turning out in the West and we must acknowledge it and work with it. For example, there is a lack of guidance and a too-relaxed stance when it comes to drugs, alcohol, sex, and sometimes even violence. This is not because of smacking or lack thereof in little children, but rather a culture of lose discipline during the formative years of the 'tweens' and the teens, due to a fear from the parents of their children not fitting in with their peers. I, for one, will never give into this fear.

I, for one, when I do become a parent, will not allow violent video games in my house. My children will dress and present modestly and will not be allowed to watch the sex-fuelled content on TV. They will not be allowed to get into fights at school. They will not have a drop of alcohol or one single cigarette touch their mouth before they are 21 (when they will hopefully learn to avoid those things for the rest of their lives too). They will not lose their virginity before 21 - to do so is beyond shocking, and too few Westerners realise it. They will also need to study hard and develop healthy leisure habits. I will make sure they conform to this lifestyle, even if it makes them look uncool in front of their peers. And although I am not going to smack them, I am going to make sure the above happens, using other means.

Obviously, no spanking does not mean no discipline. We should still be able to take away privileges and all that, and enforce them when we need to (for example to achieve the above results), consistently and firmly. Only by doing that, and maybe more often and in a stricter way to the smackers, can we actually produce the results to win the battle.

Support for Limiting the Number of Working Hours

I support legislating to discourage employers from getting employees to work too many hours. Not a ridiculously low number like 35 (they do that in France) - but we don't want to live in a nation full of people who work 65 hour weeks every week. Not in the 2010s. There are two reasons to this. And it has something to do with the recent advent of female equality too.

The first, obvious one is that it damages a family to have both parents work at that rate. Even with one parent working a 60-70 hour week on a long term basis and another parent working the usual 40 hours, you have got a lot of stress. In the past people (men) were able to work that many hours because they did not have to care for the family. Now that both men and women are working, both need to take enough time to care for their families too.

The other reason is that companies will usually only employ more people if there was a need to. A law limiting the number of working hours

means that companies will have to employ more people to complete their work, rather than just paying overtime to a smaller number of employees. This may not cost the company more really, but it does create employment for more people. And this is very important, especially in times of economic downturn.

The Compassion-First Revolution

Conservatives have often taken to calling people advocating compassionate policies as 'bleeding hearts'. I rather dislike the term as it is meaningless - a bleeding heart is a medical emergency, not a political standpoint. I would like to introduce a new term, 'Compassion first people', to mean EXACTLY what the conservatives call bleeding hearts, without the meaningless terminology. And I announce, as of today, I am a Compassion First person.

I believe we need a Compassion First revolution in politics and culture. Too often the emotions of revenge and hate are allowed to affect our decision making, and it serves nobody. If, however, we decide to put compassion first when we think about what we should do, then we would likely serve the interests of more people. The 'bleeding heart', far from a negative stereotype, is just what the world needs, desperately, now.

New Media, New Culture

The old media, dominated by big corporate outlets, really did not give people much of a voice. Many people do not think politicians represent them - but at least your politicians were elected. Our big media public figures, from singers to show hosts to actors and actresses, were not. And yet - in the (thankfully soon to be over) age of mass media, they were the heroes and legends in the lives of everyday people, shaping their worldview. Isn't this a bit dangerous in a democracy?

Welcome to the age of the new media, where everyone can be a content creator. No longer will the unelected, corporate backed big few be the only voice of the people in culture. I believe a truer cultural voice and picture will hence be reflected. And this is the revolution that is going on right now. Are you part of it yet?

Changing the World Starting From Subculture Building

Under most circumstances, one person cannot really change the world even a small bit (except when the world is ready for it anyway and all it needed was a small push). The recent failures of Barack Obama, whom many regard as the most powerful man on Earth, to change his country, is proof. At least not when you work to try to change many minds at one time. Even if you succeed in changing something, it will be so watered down as to look nothing like your dream.

However, there is one way. Create your ideal culture amongst a smaller group first. The thriving of that group will be evidence to the people around you that your ideals do work. Gradually the culture will become larger and take on mainstream significance.

Even all the world's religions started out that way.

A Light for the Hope of Ending Censorship

Although I am an advocate for public decency, I am also an advocate for limiting government power in democracies, especially on social matters. Therefore, I applaud a recent Swedish recommendation that the country abolish its censorship agency.

Whilst it is very appropriate and indeed indisputable that some stuff should be kept away from children and some stuff should never be seen in the public, the merit of letting governments decide what adults can see in private is another issue. Of concern is that this is a slippery slope that can lead to political censorship. Therefore, since 2003, I have supported the end of censorship for adults' private viewing.

The Progressive Modesty Movement: Something I Want to be Part Of

The Modesty Movement is a movement that has been growing in the past few years. It is all about young woman who dress nicely without being revealing. It is something that is very meaningful, I think. You know, I don't see the point of showing cleavage or dressing provocatively - you don't get respect, you don't get your message across when you want to communicate, and your body gets judged every time you do it.

However, too many things written about the modesty movement seem to take it from a religiously conservative point of view. I want to highlight that the modesty movement should be a progressive project. What is more progressive than not letting your body get in the way of a meaningful life, for example? And what is more regressive (all the way back to the age of apemen and beyond) than letting yourself get judged by how people like your body?

Tame that Beast Now!

There are reports that incidents of child abuse, often ending up in the child going to hospital, have been on the increase in America since the US economy started flagging.

This sends a very clear message: that ill effects of the economy impact on the whole society, and in very severe ways too. Therefore I do believe that we should hold the big businesses who can affect our economic outcomes to a higher level of accountability, with consequences to follow if they do not behave. On the flip side, we should also want our governments to regulate the economy more so that it does not go out of whack and go on its way to hurt millions. I think it is great the Obama administration is looking at ways to ensure a more stable economic future for America.

The bottom line: the economic cycle is not merely 'a phenomenon'. It is a monster that can really sting, something that should be put to an end or at least

tamed if we can. And I believe we can (it is a man-made monster anyway).

Lowering the Voting Age

I am all for lowering the voting age from 18 to 16. This has been my position consistently, from when I was below 16, right up until now, and I cannot see any reason for me to change it. Frankly, I don't see why 16 year olds should not be able to vote. 16 year olds are often political (I was), and are mature enough to cast a vote for the future of the nation. In fact, increasing the pool of young voters by doing this will certainly shift the political focus more towards the future, as young people are more likely to care about the future and accept the new ideas like tolerance and equality. This will become especially important as the population age through time due to shrinking birth rates (something that I find sad personally and therefore recommend that every couple have at least 3 children if they can, but something that we must face up to for now).

I am willing to support this even if it means that other things I support (like raising the drinking age from 18 to 21 in those places where it hasn't been done so

yet) go out the window. Lowering the voting age is an issue of ultimate importance to me.

Ending Economic Tyranny

US President Barack Obama has said that he wants to create a "post-bubble" model for solid economic growth once the current economic recession ends.

I think this is very good news, as the 'bubble' version of the economy has hurt far too many people. Whilst it may be argued that investors take their risk in doing their investment and that economic downturns are just an expected feature of the game, who can say that everyday people who have nothing to do with the investment process also deserve to get hurt in the process? Most everyday people don't even understand the economic cycle, having them to carry the burden of the bubble collapses is like a tyrant putting his subjects in jail for no crime, isn't it? It's about time the system changed.

Look, Music Snobs

There has been a recent 'Music That Makes You Dumb' study in the US. And guess what music makes you dumb.

According to the study, fans of urban artists, as well as some rock bands, tend to score lower in SAT scores. In particular, Lil Wayne and Beyonce Knowles fans did the worse on the SAT.

Which does not say a lot actually. But hey, look, for so long music snobs have said that happy, upbeat music, like the old Britney Spears, was the stupid music. It seems that stereotype is not true after all. For which I am really happy for, because I have always believe that to be wrong. After all, happy music is there for us to enjoy ourselves, something that smart people by definition definitely try to do a lot!

Whatever Your Aspirations, Unite for a Better Vision

There have been quite a lot of arguments about what institutions should represent in recent decades, and these have heated up to become a cultural war in the last decade or so. Good examples are the family, marriage and what defines a people or nation.

Actually there is no need to fight. We should instead come together to build a new vision of institutions that allows people to reach their desired life and aspirations, be they traditional and solid or radical and creative, and let everyone understand each other and live peacefully together.

A society that allows the traditional and new to coexist together and inspire each other is one that is truly blessed. I myself have the quite traditional aspirations of having a big family, but in a modern, pushing the inclusive frontier way, so that counts as creative and progressive. And I think combining these elements gives

beautiful ways of living and fulfilment!

End the Disenfranchisement

The lack of recognition of people's actual everyday life conditions that is often seen in our society has led to an unnecessary hard life for many people, and the unnecessary disenfranchisement of too many for the good of our society. Expecting everyone to be the same or be able to do the same things just isn't realistic.

It surely is something comfortable for many in the mainstream to imagine and create a system around, but this certainly isn't the good way for society, and the bad effects are being felt all around us. The feeling of disenfranchisement from life it creates for minorities has wasted many minds and great spirits, and created a lot of tension and crime around us which is not necessary.

I think that urgent attention needs to be drawn to this issue, and change needs to come quickly.

A Multiculturalism of Institutions

Different social institutions have suited different people, both from different ethnic cultural backgrounds and from different subcultures arising from the commonly shared conditions of people who may otherwise come from diverse ethnic backgrounds. They have been instrumental in sustaining stable, long term relationships, the cornerstone to any great society. Therefore, we need to give them recognition, and all of them equally. We need to integrate the diverse elements of our society, rather than giving them the choice of assimilation or disenfranchisement, because there is high likelihood that many people will choose the latter and we will soon have a disenfranchised society ripe for criminal elements to rise up all over it.

The importance of the above point has been stressed over and over again in the treatment of indigenous people in many countries, for example, but has not been extended to apply to all of society as a principle in many places. It is something that we would wish to

support at every turn, and should be a standard part of multiculturalism.